

Northeast Coastal Communities Sector

1. What ran smoothly in your sector?
 - ACE trading
 - Reporting
 - Compliance with catch limits

2. What are the top five problems your sector encountered that impeded operations from running smoothly?
 - Dockside monitoring was a major burden. With my fishermen primarily hailing from rural or remote ports, it was often a challenge to find a willing dockside monitor. Most of the time, these monitors were not local. Also, remote offloads were challenging to coordinate. In one instance, the monitor got lost on the way to the dealer and the fisherman had to wait. Also, the monitor incorrectly recorded the landing weight in another instance.
 - High leasing cost of ACE. My members were dissuaded from leasing additional ACE because of the high leasing cost relative to the price at the dock.
 - Low initial allocation. Compared to their fishing for the past few years, the active fishermen in my sector received a very low allocation. This significantly curtailed their groundfish fishing.
 - The assumption of 100% mortality of discarded, hook-caught – particularly jig-caught – fish deterred some members from fishing. Several studies have shown high survival rates of discarded hook-caught fish. Yet, this information is not incorporated into management, and fishermen are unfairly charged ACE for discarded fish that survive.

3. What potential modifications to the FMP do you think would be helpful for sector operations?
 - Set an individual cap on allocation for each species
 - Establish set-asides to protect and promote fleet diversity, including for owner-operator fishermen and commercial jig fishermen.
 - Exempt anyone who has less than 15,000 lbs allocation from the at-sea monitoring requirement. These fishermen are often far more expensive to monitor per pound of fish landed than others in the fleet, and they have the least impact on the fishery. Monitoring boats with very low allocation is not cost effective and is counter-productive.
 - Allow electronic monitoring and provide funding for the installation of the hardware similar to the VMS installation reimbursement program.
 - Allow groundfish permits to be individually and temporarily placed into CPH. Specifically, if an operator has multiple federal permits for a vessel, this operator should be allowed to selectively place the groundfish permit into CPH while still keeping one or more other permits active. This operator should also then only be bound by the reporting requirements of the active permits, unless and until the operator chooses to activate the groundfish permit. What I'm proposing is analogous to the use of VMS in

the groundfish fishery. Currently, if the fisherman is actively groundfishing, the VMS has to be active. If the fisherman has not been active since before the start of the fishing year, the VMS does not need to be active. Reporting requirements should similarly correspond with fishing activity.

- Fishermen should be granted an exemption from the federal halibut 1 fish trip limit when and only when engaged in the Maine state-waters directed halibut fishery. This fishery allows tub trawl gear only, with a hook limit and season limit, enforced with fish tags. The Maine Department of Marine Resources currently requires participating fishermen to first take a class where they learn how to tag halibut to improve data collection on this species.
- Revisit the assumption of 100% mortality for hook-caught fish. Currently, jig fishermen receive ACE deductions for undersize fish caught and released alive, but assumed to be dead for the purposes of ACE monitoring. This is a significant deterrent to jig fishing, and an unnecessary burden on this very low-impact gear type.
- Allow fishermen to carry-over more than 10% of their ACE from one year to the next.
- Consider the use of in-season gear-restricted areas to selectively protect critical habitat – similar to the year-round Whaleback Ridge closure.